

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 IO-12 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-14 RSC-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-09 NSAE-00 PA-03 PRS-01 OMB-01 T-03 RSR-01

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3/12/73 X22647

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TO AMEMBASSY SANAA IMMEDIATE

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AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY

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E. O.: 11652 N/ A

TAGS: PBOR, YE, ET, IS

SUBJ: " TIME" STORY ON ALLEGED ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF ZUQAR
ISLAND.

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THE FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED IN MARCH 19, 1973 ISSUE OF " TIME" MAGAZINE ENTITLED " AT THE GATE OF TEARS": QTE: TO PROVIDE THE OIL THAT IS VITAL TO ISRAEL' S POWERFUL MILITARY MACHINE, A STREAM OF TANKERS THIS YEAR WILL CARRY MORE THAN 35 MILLION TONS FROM PERSIAN GULF FIELDS UP THE RED SEA TO THE PORT OF EILAT. THE SOUTHERN PART OF THIS SUPPLY LINE HAS NEVER BEEN REALLY SAFE, HOWEVER. THAT WAS DEMONSTRATED IN 1971, WHEN A SMALL GROUP OF FEDAYEEN ARMED WITH BAZOOKAS ATTACKED THE ISRAEL- BOUND LIBERIAN TANKER CORAL SEA AS IT PASSED THROUGH THE TEN- MILE- WIDE STRAIT OF BAB EL MANDEB (GATE OF TEARS). THE ATTACK PROMPTED AN AUDACIOUS WEST SOUTHWEST OF PAKSONG ON 11 MARCH (NO CASUALTIES); TEAM CLASH NORTHWEST OF SARAVANE ON 9 MARCH (ONE FRIENDLY KIA). RLAF FLEW ONE AC-47 SORTIE IN SUPPORT OF TROOPS IN CONTACT SOUTH OF SOUKHOUMA NIGHT 9-10 MARCH. RLAF FLEW NO T-28 SORTIES ON 10 MARCH AND FIVE T-28 SORTIES ON 11 MARCH, ALL IN SUPPORT OF TROOPS IN CONTACT DURING FOREGOING PAKSONG AND SOUKHOUMA INCIDENTS. ENEMY RAISED PL FLAG OVER VILLAGE APPROXIMATELY 35 KILOMETERS NORTHEAST OF KHONG SEDONE ON 8 MARCH, BUT FAR FORCE RE- ENTERED VILLAGE NEXT DAY AND REPLACED PL FLAG WITH RLG FLAG; PL FLAGS WERE ALSO SIGHTED IN TWO OTHER VILLAGES NORTHEAST OF KHONG SEDONE.

E. MR V: NO GROUND ACTION REPORTED. RLAF FLEW NO SORTIES ON 10 MARCH AND EIGHT T-28 SORTIES ON 11 MARCH. LATTER WERE AGAINST ENEMY TROOPS APPROXIMATELY 50 KILOMETERS NORTHEAST OF VIENTIANE (FIVE ENEMY PROBABLE KBA) AND WERE AT REQUEST OF GROUND FORCES ON CLEARING OPERATION.

F. COUNT OF CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS: RLG DEFMIN ANNOUNCED 14 ADDITIONAL ENEMY VIOLATIONS, BRINGING TOTAL TO 207 AS OF MORNING 10 MARCH. OUR COUNT OF GROUND VIOLATIONS INITIATED BY BOTH SIDES ROSE SLIGHTLY TO 43 MAJOR (NO CHANGE) AND 286 MINOR INCIDENTS
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THROUGH 9 MARCH.

2. SECTION II - POLITICAL SITUATION

A. POLITICAL/ MILITARY GROUPS REACH IMPASSE

1) AT MEETING WITH DCM, MARCH 10, LPF VIENTIANE REPRESENTATIVE SOTH PHETRASY INDICATED THAT RLG/ LPF POLITICAL AND MILITARY GROUPS HAVE REACHED IMPASSE BECAUSE TWO SIDES HAVE DIFFERING

CONCEPTS OF ROLE OF THESE TWO GROUPS. SOTH CONFIRMED PREVIOUS REPORTING THAT RLG REGARDS GROUPS AS SUB- COMMITTEES OF JOINT COMMISSION PRESCRIBED BY VIENTIANE AGREEMENT WITH AUTHORITY TO IMPLEMENT ARTICLES OF BASIC AGREEMENT. LPF HOLDS THAT GROUPS HAVE NO INHERENT DECISION- MAKING AUTHORITY AND SHOULD BE LIMITED TO SPECIFIC TASK OF DRAWING UP MILITARY AND POLITICAL PROTOCOLS ELABORATING DETAILS OF VIENTIANE AGREEMENT, AFTER WHICH JOINT COMMISSION WOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO IMPLEMENT THEM.

2) MILITARY AND POLITICAL GROUP MEETINGS, SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 12, WERE NOT HELD, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE OF FOREGOING PROBLEM. REGULAR " TUESDAY TALKS" SESSION IS, HOWEVER, STILL SCHEDULED FOR TOMORROW.

B. LPF REP' S COMMENTS RE U. S. POWS

IN MEETING WITH DCM, MARCH 10, LPF VIENTIANE REP SOTH PHETRASY ADDED NOTHING SIGNIFICANT TO WHAT WE ALREADY KNEW CONCERNING IDENTIFICATION OF U. S. POWS AND MODALITIES OF RELEASE. SOTH MERELY CONFIRMED THAT USG REQUEST FOR LIST OF U. S. PWS CAPTURED IN LAOS WAS TRANSMITTED PERSONALLY TO PRINCE SOUPHANNOUVONG BY CHIEF OF LPF DELEGATION PHOUNE SIPRASEUTH. PHOUNE DID NOT HAVE REPLY TO OUR DEMARCHE WHEN HE RETURNED TO VIENTIANE ON MARCH 8. SOTH REITERATED PREVIOUS STATEMENT THAT PWS CAPTURED IN LAOS WOULD BE RETURNED IN LAOS, BUT REFUSED TO DISCUSS MODALITIES FOR RETURN OF NINE USPWS ON FEB 1 LIST TRANSMITTED TO US IN PARIS.

C. PRIMIN REPORTS TO KING ON NEGOTIATIONS/ NATIONAL ASSEMBLY QUESTIONS

PRIME MINISTER RETURNED TO VIENTIANE MORNING MARCH 12 AFTER TWO- DAY TRIP TO LUANG PRABANG, WHERE HE REPORTED TO KING ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH LPF. XAT LAO REPORTED THAT SOUVANNA INFORMED
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THE KING ON CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS WHICH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HAD RAISED REGARDING AGREEMENT AND NOTED THAT PRIMIN WOULD ANSWER THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY' S QUERY, POSSIBLY THIS WEEK.

D. SWEDISH TV TEAM TRAVELS TO SAM NEUA

SWEDISH TV TEAM, COMPOSED OF FIVE RELATIVELY YOUNG PEOPLE, TRAVELED TO SAM NEUA MARCH 11 ABOARD ANTONOV-2 FLIGHT. THEY WERE PLANNING TO RETURN TO VIENTIANE IN ABOUT FIVE DAYS. SO FAR AS WE ARE AWARE, THIS IS THE FIRST SUCH ORGANIZED EXCURSION FOR WESTERN NEWSMEN IN RECENT YEARS.
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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** UNCLASSIFIED

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 MAR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE045047
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: FMDICKMAN
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SECSTATE WASHDC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730324/aaaahjub.tel
Line Count: 172
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: thigpegh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07-Dec-2001 by elbezejf>; APPROVED <05-Feb-2002 by thigpegh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> jms 971117
Subject: " TIME" STORY ON ALLEGED ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF ZUQAR ISLAND.
TAGS: PBOR, ET, IS, YE
To: ADDIS ABABA
AMMAN
ASMARA
CAIRO
JERUSALEM
JIDDA
KUWAIT

ROME
SANAA
TEL AVIV

Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005